



June 29, 2016

The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
423 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Sablan,

We write today to thank you and your cosponsors for your leadership in introducing the Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act of 2016 to ban the possession and trade of shark fins across the U.S. The popular celebration of Shark Week offers a unique chance to educate the public, as well as policymakers, about the vital importance of conserving shark species and habitats. To preserve our invaluable marine species and ecosystems for future generations, we agree that leaders like you and private organizations like ours must partner in immediate action to halt the bloody shark fin trade.

You and your cosponsors have been leaders in efforts to prevent wildlife poaching and trafficking. We applaud your turning this hard-won expertise and influence to the shark fin trade. Finning requires cutting the fins, a small percentage of body weight, from living sharks and then discarding the fatally wounded animals to die. Upwards of 75 million sharks are killed every year, far outpacing many species' capacities to replenish. As a result, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species has estimated that a quarter of all shark species are threatened with extinction. Studies have shown that shark population declines ripple out to affect our global marine ecosystems in alarming and irreversible ways.

SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation would like to join your efforts to stop shark finning and its cascading effects on our global marine ecosystems. We are also working to educate the public about the urgent need for shark and ocean conservation. We have already begun this work at SeaWorld Orlando, where a redesigned Shark Wreck Reef area, anchored by the new Mako hypercoaster, offers interactive education experiences dedicated to several shark species. Marine wildlife artist and conservationist Guy Harvey has partnered with SeaWorld to host these interactive experiences as well as contribute proceeds from related merchandise to scientific research and global ocean conservation efforts. To further this work, we pledge our combined support to the Shark Fin Trade Elimination Act, and offer our assistance to educate lawmakers, as well as the public, about this cruel practice and the positive impacts of a healthy shark population worldwide.

The United States has already banned shark finning, in recognition of its brutality and waste. This bill would take the responsible next step to protect endangered wildlife and marine ecosystems by bringing federal law in line with trade and possession bans already adopted in eleven of our largest and most diverse states, including Texas, California, and New York.

Again, we thank you and your cosponsors for your dedication to ending shark finning and to protecting the unique and irreplaceable life in our oceans. We hope that you will consider us as resources and allies in the fight against finning.

Sincerely,



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